

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

I urge you to take an interest in objective, fact-based journalism in order to contribute to the public good. As Bill Moyers has says, the delusional is no longer marginal, and as John Sayles says, balanced coverage does not mean 10 minutes of lies followed by 10 minutes of truth. As Abe Lincoln said, you can't fool all the people all the time. Eventually the public will become painfully aware that you have violated its trust.

As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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